

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-08 NEA-07 ARA-06 IO-03 NSC-05

NSCE-00 PM-03 SP-02 L-01 INR-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 SAM-01

ACDA-10 H-01 OMB-01 /072 W  
----- 063771

P R 271725Z JAN 76  
FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5031  
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA  
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS  
AMEMBASSY DAKAR  
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA  
AMEMBASSY LAGOS  
AMEMBASSY LISBON  
AMEMBASSY LOURENCO MARQUES  
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA  
AMEMBASSY MADRID  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY RABAT

S E C R E T NOUAKCHOTT 0205

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR XJ AO MR  
SUBJECT: ANGOLA: MAURITANIA URGES CONTINUED RESISTANCE TO SOVIET  
INTERVENTION

REF: STATE 13701

1. MAURITANIAN MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, HAMD  
OULD MOUKNASS, CALLED ME IN JANUARY 26 TO CONVEY HIS GOVERN-  
MENT'S GROWING CONCERN OVER CONTINUING DETERIORATION IN ANGOLA,  
AND TO URGE WEST AND VERY SPECIFICALLY THE US TO REDOUBLE ITS  
EFFORTS TO COUNTER SOVIET INTERVENTION IN SUPPORT OF MPLA.

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FOR PAST TWO WEEKS MOUKNASS HAS LIVED ANGOLA PROBLEM: AT

OAU FOREIGN MINISTERS CONFERENCE, AT OAU CHIEFS OF STATE MEETING, AND AT JUST-CONCLUDED MEETING OF OAU LIBERATION COMMITTEE. (HE RETURNED FROM LOURENCE MARQUES EVENING JANUARY 25.)

2. IN INTRODUCING SUBJECT, MOUKNASS DECLARED ANGOLA PROBLEM HAS SPLIT AFRICA INTO TWO EVENLY-DIVIDED CAMPS AND ISSUE NOW DOMINATES AFRICAN COUNCILS VIRTUALLY TO EXCLUSION OF EVERYTHING ELSE. HE REPORTED MPLA MILITANTS ATTEMPTED TO FORCE LIBERATION COMMITTEE TO FOCUS ON ANGOLA, AND ONLY CONCERTED EFFORTS OF OTHERS (ARGUING CHIEFS OF STATES HAD ACTED, WORKING GROUP WAS SEIZED WITH FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY, AND MINISTERS HAD NO RIGHT TO SECOND-GUESS CHIEFS) MANAGED TO SIDETRACK MILITANTS AND REFOCUS ATTENTION ON ZIMBABWE, NAMIBIA, ETC. MOUKNASS RECALLED MAURITANIA HAD SUPPORTED MPLA DURING FIGHT AGAINST PORTUGUESE COLONIALISTS. BUT ACHIEVEMENT OF INDEPENDENCE HAD FUNDAMENTALLY ALTERED SITUATION, AND REQUIRED ALL SYMPATHIZERS TO CEASE SUPPORT OF PARTICULAR LIBERATION GROUP AND BEGIN PRESSING FOR GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY. MOUKNASS INSISTED THAT ONLY WORKABLE SOLUTION WAS COALITION OF ALL THREE FRACTIONS, AND DECLARED FAILURE OF THREE GROUPS TO ESTABLISH SINGLE COMPROMISE GOVERNMENT WOULD INSURE 25 TO 30 YEARS OF BLOODY CIVIL WAR. PRESIDENT KAUNDA'S GRAPHIC DESCRIPTION OF HUMAN AND MATERIAL RAVAGES OF CURRENT FIGHTING DURING CONVERSATION AT ADDIS CLEARLY MADE LASTING IMPRESSION ON MOUKNASS.

3. MOUKNASS THEN DECLARED THAT WEST AND SPECIFICALLY THE US MUST NOT ALLOW SOVIETS TO IMPOSE MPLA ON REST OF ANGOLA, AND URGED US TO CONTINUE AND TO REDOUBLE ITS EFFORTS TO COUNTER SOVIET INTERVENTION. (DURING PRESENTATION, MOUKNASS SEVERAL TIMES EXPLICITLY EQUATED CUBANS WITH SOVIETS.) OBSERVING THAT GREAT POWERS HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR LOOKING AHEAD 20 TO 30 YEARS, MINISTER NOTED SOVIETS HAVE ALREADY ACQUIRED "PRESSURE POINTS" UP AND DOWN WEST COAST OF AFRICA AND HAVE FOOTHOLD IN ALGERIA. HE SUGGESTED THAT IF SOVIETS WERE NOT STOPPED NOW THEY WOULD IN A FEW YEARS BE ABLE TO EXERT

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EFFECTIVE PRESSURE ON REMAINING STATES OF CENTRAL AND WEST AFRICA FROM LOCATIONS WHERE THEY ARE ALREADY INSTALLED. AND ONCE SOVIETS ARE DUG IN, "ATLANTIC IS NO LONGER VERY WIDE". MINISTER REPEATEDLY CHARACTERIZED SITUATION AS "TRES, TRES GRAVE", AND SPEAKING FOR MAURITANIAN LEADERSHIP ASSERTED THAT "WE ARE AFRAID". MOUKNASS COMMENTED QUIETLY THAT WHILE HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES HAD PERHAPS NOT PERCEIVED VERY CLEARLY ISSUES POSED IN

VIETNAM, THEY HAVE CRYSTAL-CLEAR VIEW OF THREAT POSED BY SOVIET EXPANSIONISM NOW THAT VENUE IS AFRICA AND TARGET IS THEIR CLOSE FRIENDS AND PERHAPS EVEN THEMSELVES. HE ADMITTED PUZZLEMENT OVER TWO POINTS: HE DECLARED HE COULD NOT COMPREHEND SOVIET BEHAVIOUR IN ANGOLA NOR FATHOM SOVIET POLICY IN AFRICA SINCE SOVIET ACTIONS WERE SUCH CLEAR AND TOTAL REPUDIATION OF HELSINKI AGREEMENT SIGNED JUST FEW SHORT MONTHS AGO. SECOND, HE COULD NOT COMPREHEND ATTITUDE OF US CONGRESS RE ANGOLA WHEN SOVIET THREAT AGAINST AFRICA AND WEST WAS SO OBVIOUS TO ANYONE WHOTOOK A MOMENT TO LOOK.

4. RECALLING PRESIDENT FORD'S LETTER TO PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH AND POINTING TO SERIES OF PUBLIC STATEMENTS SECRETARY HAS MADE RECENTLY ON ANGOLA, I ASSURED MINISTER THAT EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF USG IS AS CONCERNED AS HE ABOUT SOVIET EXPANSIONISM INTO SOUTHERN AFRICA AND AS CONVINCED AS HE THAT ONLY SOLUTION IN ANGOLA IS COALITION GOVERNMENT OF ALL POLITICAL AND TRIBAL GROUPINGS. I ALSO EXPRESSED CONVICTION THAT PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY ARE DETERMINED TO CONTINUE TO COUNTER SOVIET INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA, AND VOICED CONFIDENCE THAT THEY WILL DEVISE SOME WAY TO PERSUADE CONGRESS TO PERMIT THEM TO DO SO.

5. COMMENT: WHILE GIRM'S NEW-FOUND CONCERN OVER SOVIET MEDDLING MAY BE CALCULATED TACTIC TO LAY GROUNDWORK FOR SUBSEQUENT EFFORT TO CONVINCE USG OF CONGRUENCE OF ANGOLA AND SAHARA, I AM MORE INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT IT IS HONEST RESULT OF SUDDEN DISCOVERY OF POLITICAL REALITY. (A DISCOVERY MAURITANIAN AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON HAS NOT YET MADE PER REFTEL). LAST EAST-WEST CONFRONTATION IN AFRICA WAS FIFTEEN PLUS YEARS AGO WHEN MAURITANIA WAS FRENCH COLONY STRUGGLING FOR INDEPENDENCE AND PRESENT MAURITANIAN LEADERS (WITH  
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EXCEPTION OF PRESIDENT) WERE TEENAGE STUDENTS. MORE-OVER, IMMEDIACY OF THREAT IN TIME AND SPACE IS MARVELOUSLY EFFECTIVE FOR CLEARING ONE'S MIND, PARTICULARLY OF THIRD WORLD RHETORIC ABOUT POPULAR DEMOCRACY AND ANTI (US) IMPERIALISM OF NORTH KOREA, NORTH VIETNAM, AND VIET CONG WHICH WAS SWALLOWED WHOLE UNCHALLENGED A FEW SHORT YEARS AGO. WHAT WE ARE WITNESSING MAY BE THE BEGINNINGS OF THE POLITICAL MATURATION OF AN IDEALISTIC THIRD WORLD LEADERSHIP GROUP WHICH HAS BEEN FORCED BY THE CONSEQUENCES OF ITS OWN POLICY DECISIONS ON SAHARA TO FACE UP TO AND GRAPPLE WITH THE UNPLEASANT POLITICAL REALITIES OF THIS WORLD. KEYSTONE OF MAURITANIA'S FOREIGN POLICY THESE PAST FIFTEEN YEARS, THE GOAL, ACTIVELY PURSUED, OF BEING FRIENDS WITH AS MANY NATIONS AS POSSIBLE, MAY WELL HAVE BEEN FIRST CASUALTY OF ITS

SAHARA ADVENTURE.HANDYSIDE

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** INTERVENTION, POLICIES, ANTISOVIET, POLITICAL SITUATION  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 27 JAN 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** CunninFX  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976NOUAKC00205  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760032-0547  
**From:** NOUAKCHOTT  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
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**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t19760118/aaaaapgu.tel  
**Line Count:** 170  
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**Office:** ACTION AF  
**Original Classification:** SECRET  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** LIMDIS  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 4  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Previous Handling Restrictions:** LIMDIS  
**Reference:** 76 STATE 13701  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** CunninFX  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 15 APR 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <15 APR 2004 by CollinP0>; APPROVED <16 AUG 2004 by CunninFX>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** ANGOLA: MAURITANIA URGES CONTINUED RESISTANCE TO SOVIET INTERVENTION  
**TAGS:** PFOR, XJ, AO, MR, UR, MPLA, (HAMDI OULD MOUKNASS)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006